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THE BALLAD OF MONSIEUR PEU SUR

Beyond all years, expanded time,
There lived a simple man
Whom people called Peu Sur
The most uncertain in the land.

He never knew which road to take,
The left one or the right,
And so he'd walk the middle path;
Each track he'd keep in sight.

In love he'd never vow to one
But always held a few.
For then, he felt if one was lost
There would still be number two.

One day while resting from the hunt,
In somber woods alone,
Our Peu Sur heard a quiet voice
Behind a distant stone.

"What could that be? A spirit? No!
Maybe only a beast.
I'll check this out. Who knows perhaps
I'll shoot myself a feast!"

With cautious steps he made his way,
So careful that he crawled.
And lo he saw a tiny man
Just seven inches tall.

"Hello my friend! Destin's the name.
I'm hear to view the prize.
Have you come also to this place
To see a fool's demise?"

"What nonsense is this that you speak?"
Said Peu Sur with a roar.
"I see no prize or fool about,
Waste precious time no more!"

"It's very simple really sir.
Look straight ahead and see,
A block of gold, a silver chain,
On each side of that tree."

"Now coming close, two bulls appear,
Each one of heavy stride.
One to the block, one to the chain
Will presently be tied."

"And all I'll do is fade away
And wait for one to play the game.
For if he wins, he's much to gain;
The block of gold, the silver chain."

Peu Sur was puzzled by the sight
But thought he'd take a chance.
So walking forth he eyed each piece;
Investigative glance.

"How beautiful the gold appears,
A treasure it would be.
But yet the chain of silver
Would hold perfectly my key."

And so he being dubious,
Yet similarly bold,
Peu Sur picked up the silver chain
And then the block of gold.

Each hand holding an article,
He gazed at each one's charm.
But then he felt a might pull
On both his outstretched arms.

The bulls were tugging separately
Each one a different way.
And Peu Sur's limbs were being stretched,
He could not break away.

He knew if he would drop one thing,
The chain or else the block,
He'd be set free and still have one;
At least the pain would stop.

But Peu Sur couldn't quite decide
Which prize he wanted more.
Each item had a special grace,
A splendor and grandeur.

And so unable to decide,
The bulls kept pulling strong.
And Peu Sur's joints were torn apart,
Arms gone before too long.

Realizing he had lost both
The block of gold and chain.
While seeing members yanked away
And dying from the pain.

There came a voice behind the stone,
"Too late this man was taught;
Decisions make, for if you don't,
You will end up with nought!"

Linda Ryan

PROLOGUE

Once upon a time there lived a little boy named Matthew in an enchanted forest of a far off land. Nothing was real in this land because everything was; and as a result everything was kind and happy. One fine day while riding on the back of the East Wind and laughing with eagles in the azure blue, Matthew saw a flash of light far below in the forest. Swooping low to the tree tops in search of this new and only mystery, Matthew saw that this light was merely the reflection of star light which radiated from the shroud of a long white-bearded ancient man. Touching the ground softly by a small clear pond, Matthew plucked a hollow reed and piped a sweet song of greeting to this unknown stranger. The old man smiled an old man's patient smile, sat on a large rock, and savored each note of the crude pipe until the song was finished. The old stranger then gently bid Matthew sit by his side.

"What is your name, Wizard?" laughed the boy.

"Lo, I am no such Wizard, but a mere prophet; and I am called self."

"Self is a strange name for such an old fellow. Have you a final name?" asked the boy.

"Yes," said the old man softly, "my very last name is one that is fulfilling, and that is why I remain so very old."

"I cannot understand this riddle" replied the boy, "riddle me once more."

"You shall be riddled enough — too soon and too often. But that is not my prophecy to give. Come! Listen closely, for there is just a short time left. Soon you shall go on a long journey to a world you do not know, and knows not you. Once there, you will come to know not what you know now and have always known, and this not knowing will pursue you ceaselessly until you come to know it and thereby have knowledge of having known it. Only then may you return once more to this enchanted land of knowing."

Still gleeful, Matthew asked, "But why must I come to know this not knowing if I know and have known and will know?"

Always patient, the ageless gentle man in the faintest lilt of a voice spoke to Matthew, "It is necessary for you to make this journey — to sail from blue sky through blue water, from warmth to cold, from light to dark; just as it shall be necessary to do over and over, again and again. It is the only way that you may grow younger, smaller, knowing and more knowing. Only then when you have become the smallest particle of the universe; the tiniest droplet of soundless light; then, and only then will you come to know the only knowing."

With this, a cloud-like hand appeared in the sky and came to rest near the boy. The bidding of the hand was as clear to Matthew as the pond from which he had plucked his pipe. With pipe in hand Matthew sat confidently in the soft cushions of the palm of the now open hand.

The old man, unmoved, in his still voice, spoke to Matthew this last time saying: "When you go to this world that is not this world, go not so trustingly to unknown hands. Hands of this world speak with rods, touch softly not often, manipulate, legislate, control, and silently question and answer in a single motion. These hands perceive little for their strength is in sinew, not tears."

With this, the cosmic hand slowly closed around the boy and disappeared into the vast expansion of the universe.

A tiny beading tear was caught unawares in the prophet's eye . . . and Matthew was born.

Richard McMonagle

WINGS

If words are my feathers,
Then books are my wings
When I soar to the sapphire lands of the kings —

Where the dragon is gentled
By bright Faery throngs,
And the Unicorn's horn
Is the truest of songs

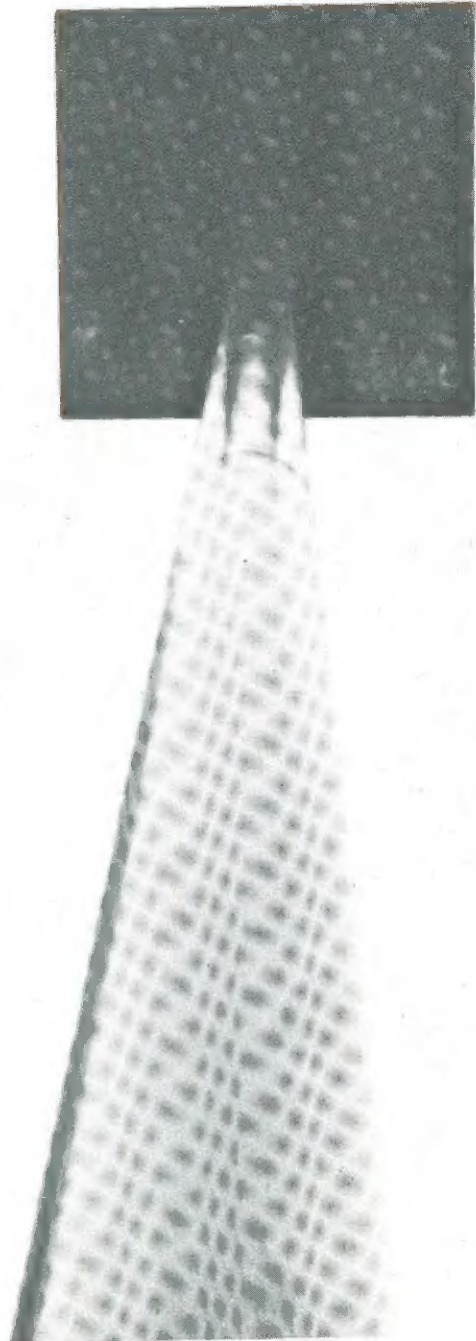
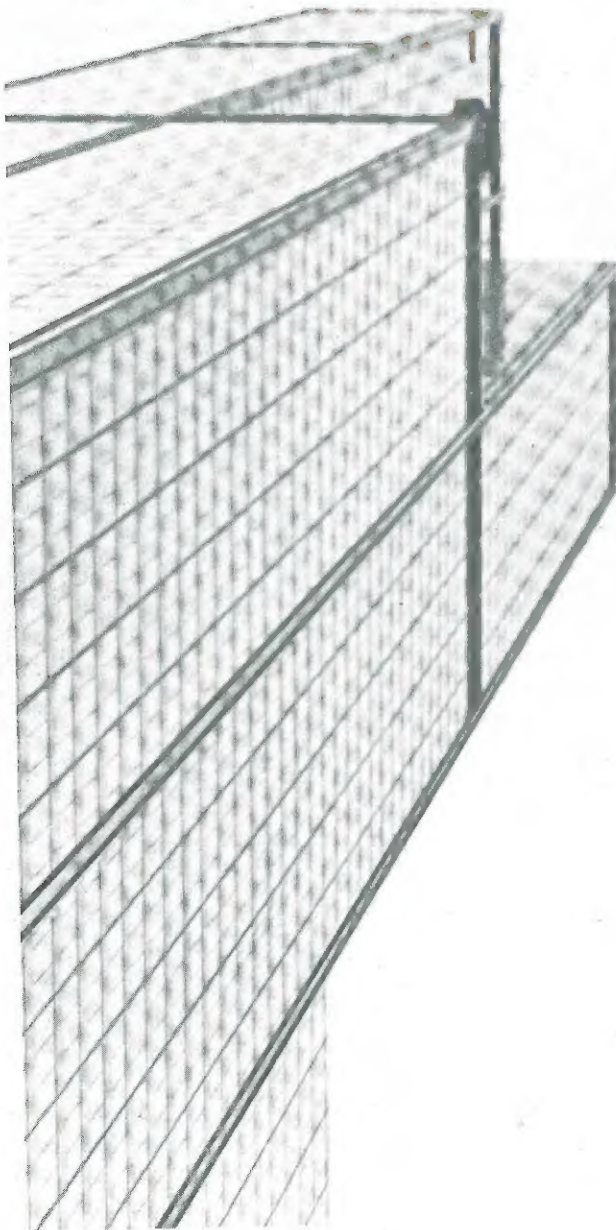
Where the moon is a huntress,
The river a sprite,
And the silver-winged horse
Feeds on rainbows at night

And the Fair Folk go reaping
The jewels they have sown,
And the Druids' last sunsets
Pierce rhymes into stone

Where the ring is enchanted,
The sword is aflame,
And the tongue of the Lion
Is singing my name

When I soar to the sapphire lands of the kings
On words that are feathers,
In books that are wings.

Tami Smith



A PROBLEM IN DEMOGRAPHICS

It's a problem in demographics: given enough people, someone, somewhere, will be any given thing. With four billion people on Earth, seventy-two million people on the Moon, and nine hundred forty million people on Mars, you have a very large population to choose from in your search for a person with some given quality. The quality that we were looking for was a very wealthy, young, intelligent, somewhat insane male, with a grudge against the Soviet Union. He had to be qualified for space flight and not afraid to die.

We found someone like that eventually. His name was Vasily Grotnov. The SovBloc countries had chased out a number of young engineers who had expressed some dissatisfaction with the Workers Paradise, expecting them to feel that exile was a punishment worse than death. The engineers apparently did not feel that way, and the SovBloc countries quietly dropped that form of punishment from their lists. One of the engineers they had sent out was Grotnov. They kept his family, however, and he never saw or heard of them again.

Grotnov was a low gravity-mining engineer who did most of his work on asteroids, extracting the small amounts of precious heavy metals that were, for some reason, to be found in these bits of orbiting rock.

If you're good, you can make a good deal of money selling iron, uranium, thorium and whatnot to the ever eager markets all over the solar system.

Our computer noticed, however, that Grotnov never sold to SovBloc buyers. It wasn't an aversion to that system of government, particularly, because he sold to the Chinasia Bloc and at quite good profits, too.

We, that is, I, approached him about our plan. I had never seen Grotnov before and he turned out to be the classical "Russian Bear" that Soviet propaganda says all good communists should look like and so few do. He was slightly taller than average, had broad, slightly rounded shoulders, a broad, bland face, thick arms and legs, and thick dark black hair.

"So," he said, after I had explained what we wanted (this was at the third meeting, the first two were to observe his reactions and attitudes) "you want me to make an asteroid into a huge guided missile."

I don't think the pained expression showed too much on my face. I said, "Well, no, not exactly. What we want is a possible deterrent against the possibility of unfortunate and inexplicable nuclear power station mishaps which seem to occur with startling timeliness in certain moments of political crisis, that's all."

"Oh," said Grotnov (I don't think he believed me) "what you want is a guided missile that looks like an asteroid that accidentally drops on a SovBloc city every time there is an accidental power station explosion."

"It's not a guided missile." I said.

"All right, then, a guided asteroid. What's the difference? That is what you want me to build isn't it?"

"Something like that." I admitted. Sometimes you just can't convince people to see things properly.

Anyway, to make the story short, Grotnov went out and built the miss — I mean, asteroid, and did it in just three weeks, which was lucky.

To see why it was lucky, I must first explain something. The world's resources are tied up in localized places. This fact gives rise to nations or blocks of nations who protect their interests by terrorizing — um — I mean by negotiating with the rest of the world for whatever raw material is needed. For example, the AraBloc controls most of the world's petroleum and the lower African Bloc controls diamonds, and so on. In this connection it should be mentioned that the SovBloc controls chromium, platinum, caviar, and several dozen other raw materials of greater or lesser importance.

Now, it was lucky that the asteroid was finished because the SovBloc was threatening to cut off our supplies of lithium hydride, which is used in fusion plants as the fuel. The SovBloc did not control all the sources of lithium hydride, but they did control about forty-six or forty-seven

percent and cutting this supply would double, triple, perhaps quadruple the price of fusion fuel, thus raising the price of energy by the same amount. I don't remember exactly what they were demanding that time, more wheat allocations from the Canadamerican grain Bloc, I think.

Within the week, two nuclear power stations, one near Chicago, the other one in Des Moines, had inexplicably exploded. The crater in Des Moines, especially, is often pointed out as being a perfectly classical nuclear power plant explosion site.

The Canadamerican grain officials seemed about ready to give in when they heard the news of the approach of an asteroid, on collision course with the Earth. They hastily postponed a decision until the asteroid hit, figuring the grain might be needed at the impact site, or even worse, that the asteroid might destroy some of their grain fields.

Needless to say, it was Grotnov's asteroid. There had not been time to install an automatic pilot of the necessary complexity, so Grotnov bravely volunteered to pilot the asteroid himself. The fact that if he was successful would mean that we wouldn't have to pay him the enormous salary he was entitled to had nothing to do with it. He volunteered voluntarily (if you see what I mean) before we had a chance to think of it.

The story of the flight of the asteroid has been told many times, in the newspapers and magazines. Just suffice to say that it did hit Earth and that where the city of Moscow once stood is a huge circular pit that is often pointed out as a perfectly classical meteor crater.

Jackson Houser

OF LIES AND PORTRAITS

Walking along the seashore this morning,
I realized something I couldn't admit.

I love you no more than you love me.

I loved the portrait I'd painted of you

And you were that portrait —

As long as I didn't look too close.

Suddenly, last night, you seemed different

And now I know its because

I had a chance to see you.

And seeing you smash that painstakingly created illusion,

And watching the fragments sink beneath the waves,

Left me a chance to think.

This morning I walked along the seashore

Looking for a fragment of the past,

An unbroken piece of dream still lying on the shore.

I half-hoped I wouldn't find it.

I didn't.

I can't even remember it now.

I can hardly remember you.

What was your name again?

Catherine Albertson

SUMMER

And when they speak of summers

I'll remember this one, golden one.

A mosaic threaded through

With silver moons on empty beaches

And warm, wet footprints standing lonely on
the shore . . .

Fading mileposts.

Roads which went nowhere

And silvery, soft whispered poems

That died in the fishermen's nets.

Trading masks and lifelong dreams,

Wandering, wishing

To live our lives in one long moment

On a lonely, infinite pier

Looking out to

A dark and midnight

Forever.

Catherine Albertson

SEA TEA

HORIZONTAL GREEN AND UNHEARD NOTES
FILL A GLACIC ATMOSPHERE
WITH GOTHIC ALPHABETS
WHILE THOUGHTS OF LAUGHTER
AND CONCERN EXCHANGE HARMONIOUSLY
BY UNSPEAKING TONGUES
THAT SHARE A CUP OF OZISH BELIEF
AND MOVED BY THE MYSTERY
UNCONCERNED WITH UNCERTAINTY
CONTENTED TO KNOW AND
OSMOS THE PRECIOUS SEA TEA.

D' INNOCENT D' CEPTION

A CONSPIRATOR'S LAUGHTER
LILTING LOO
AND LONGING
TO CONVOLUTE
THE SOUND OF SLEEP
BY LOVE'S WARMTH
AND KNOWINGSHIP

Richard McMonogle

blue light on blue ground
blue animals crawling
it must be night
there is no sun
there is no day
why don't I know
where did the sun go.
am I blind
am I insane
is this a game.
show me light
end this night
I don't understand
this blue hand
coming from the sky
reaching for my eye
I can't die
I won't die
not from a blue hand
it's not real
it can't feel
it can't kill
why did I die

Rick Campbell

can you split the eye
of a giant at a thousand paces
can you sneak up on a sparrow
without leaving any traces

can your dreams run red lights
in front of city hall
can you fall from two stories high
and bounce like a rubber ball
can you understand my nonsense
any better than I
can you give some reason
why you should evey try
have you seen a golden mountain
glowing in the setting sun
have you seen the finger poised
on the trigger of a jet black gun
have you a vision of things to be
a nightmare of what's in store
have you reached the sacred soil
or tripped before you could score

Rick Campbell

PAN'S PERMIA

SHOULD I GRASP THIS VACUOUS POD
OF SPHINXAL MASS
AND RECOILED OSCILLATION
WHOSE EUPHONY IS THE DYVER'S DOG OF DARKNESS
HOWLING A SUITE OF SYTHE BREATH
WITHIN THE LIFELESS GELID ORB.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE WHAT ENOUGH THERE NEVER IS
AND THIS BESTIAL ELOQUENCE
WILL WITHER THE LEAVES THAT ONLY YESTERDAY
HERALDED A THOUSAND YEARS OR MORE.

WHAT CACOPHONY PLAYS THIS SOUL
SPIRITED BY THE WIND OF THE WINGS
AND TOUCHED BRIEFLY BY PETAL DUST
DROPS OF SOUND WHICH NEVER EXISTED
IN HARMONIOUS SPACE
WHERE SERAPHIMS SING OF SONIC SEEDS.

A CHARIOT HEARSE ON TRIUMPH'S TREK
LAID BARE THIS BARREN ROAD OF STRINGS
THAT POUNDS THE COLORLESS SAND ALONE
IN THE BEGINING OR END OF INFINITY.

Richard McMonogle

THERE AND THEN AGAIN

It's time that though the lover's dream
Of tranquility and a scene serene
Is next to you and yet untouched
The door must open to all of us
Or let it close and we'll be free
Of something called humanity

I laugh at those who come to call
On praises meant for one and all
For priases might be stored and kept
Or used as payment for a debt
Their purpose makes you soon forget
What there is no acclaim for

Glenn Powell

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE

It takes awhile to know the difference tween
What is not and what is ought
not dot ot spot flzzot.

You are the "Crown of Creation"
and you've got no choice
you've got to take your games and hide
them away
and pretend
it's not raining

Although you may be slow
to recognize the signs
you realize the signs are there
But you can't buy them you're a
dirty old man
America

All of ya
are just another
game on the shelf
and all entitled "self"

so conclusions must be drawn
on the wall and hidden by
shades of posterity

if it's close to being true
they'll go with you

and help you tear down those walls
you carefully built so long ago

Glenn Powell

POETASTER'S LAMENT

All language is a castle
Whose walls are shaped of air,
And I a foolish naked knight
Who do my jousting there

(And watch the kings at careless play
Within a wordgreen bower,
The wizards necromancing thoughts
Atop the lettered tower)

And cry out for Excalibur
Sunk deep beneath the lake,
And rust my mettle dreaming
Of the magic I would make.

And wandering through the castle,
Sick in a fettered fear,
I call myself a foolish knight
To do my jousting here.

Tami Smith

Kysaholath

Shadowcutter is his name
for he stabs the night,
rands asunder cloudbanks dark
bringing with him light.
See him marching overhead —
see his face emerge
from behind a stifling mist;
see him resubmerge,
only to regain his place,
triumphing at last,
with his flowing silver robes
round him once more cast.
Perilous is his domain;
emies abound:
shadow-demons fill the sky;
ebon shapes surround
him, eager to tear and gnaw —
once a month succeed
in eroding him to naught.
Still, with wondrous speed,
he regains white, glowing form —
fills his foes with fright,
diminishes them with his beams,
puts them all to flight.
So he travels astral paths,
vigilant, serene,
lonely, argent guardian
of his high demesne.

Flick Mager

The Call to Arms

Some people seated on a bench
one bleak and wet October day
were all discoursing on the world,
and one of them was heard to say:
"The time there was in our city,
a woman, mattered not how fair,
could walk along along the streets
and never fear for danger there.
The nights were safe as brightest day,
and no one lurked in shadows black
to steal the purse of passers-by
or stab lone strollers in the back.
The time there was when flowers bloomed
on corners where now drifters laze,
when trees shed coolness on the walks;
both full and fair were other days."

"The time will be," said someone else,
"when law and order pass away,
when virtue is an empty word
and evil has its sovereign sway.
The time will come when good is lost
in the confusion of the bad,
when people's base emotions rule.
Our future's looking very sad."

"The time there is," said somebody
who'd come upon them from behind,
"For changes to be made, and us
our better sides to seek and find.
Get off that bench! You do no good
by mourning for the moldy past.
The present's here; regretfully,
the present was not made to last."

The future is upon you, friends,
and if you hope to make it good,
you move no mountains sitting there
wishing that someone else would.
The time there is for bettering.
The world you loftily put down
you should be busy raising up."
They paled beneath his scornful frown;
he strode away and left them there,
each with an outraged reply
stifled on his trembling lips
The stranger's truth none could deny.

Flick Mager





WHISPERSONG

The rain threw itself softly against the windowpane. A little boy smoothed his face against the glass and looked out upon a garden of grass and wildflowers. His garden . . . his cottage. The raindrops, even softer now, fell into the long grasses that waved in the wind. He knew the symphony they made together, the wind and the grasses and the rain; he waited for it always. Whispersong, that's what its called, he thought. Whispersong, my very own whispersong.

And when the whispersong came, he waited for his playmate. She would come with the rains, bringing her dolls, to his cottage in his garden. And they would play at tea with tiny china cups while his whispersong sung outside . . . He didn't know her name, only that she had large, dark eyes and smiled so beautifully and smelled of the rain.

He loved the rain. He loved the coolness and the freshness it brought. Not like the heat of the noon, which the sun makes alive with sparks. He did not like heat or warmth. He liked the dampness and darkness, the peace of his cottage when it rained. When she would come.

But, she had not come for a long while now. Dimly, the little child remembered having missed her visits. Dimly, he remembered waiting in the rain and not seeing her at all and how much that had hurt. But, no, she would come today, for it was raining and the whispersong was playing and she always came with the whispersong. Yes, she would come and they would play at tea like always, and he would laugh when she pretended surprise that his teacup was empty and blamed the dolls for drinking from it. How he loved that game. How he loved her pretense that he was not really there, but only part of the parade of dolls she brought as guests to his cottage. How he cherished being part of her make believe game.

He waited.

Slowly, as if in a dream, he remembered the first time she had come, the only time she'd come in sunlight. There had been so much sunlight that day, so much awful brightness he'd felt himself burning, becoming consumed by the hot dazzle of it all. He remembered that horrid sunlight and how it had leaped up at him from the floor and thrown itself at his face from the walls in grasping arms of yellow and orange. He heard screaming, his own silent screams at the dazzling arms that tore at him, the brightness that threatened to possess him. There was wind that day, too, but it had not been the gentle breezes of the whispersong. It had howled and torn at him hotly. And there had been no rain to cool him, to make peace. Instead there was blackness; violent, billowing blackness that choked his cries and blinded him.

Voices. He could remember voices. A woman's voice shouting at him through the blackness and the leaping bright gold patterns, "My son . . . my son . . . my son" over and over until the words tumbled over each other and became silence. Who was it who had cried at him like that? He could not remember. It was not his playmate, for he had not known her then, though he had seen her face in the crowds that milled about outside his cottage. No, she had come the next day, the first day of the rains and whispersong.

How comforting to remember that next day. No longer was his cottage bright with deranged sunlight, no longer choking with blackness, though they had left behind their harsh ghosts. Those black things that reached from floor to ceiling and ceiling to floor and crumbled in his hands when he touched them. No, the next day had been cool, the wind reduced to its gentle, caressing whisper, the rains softly plummeting into the grasses. She had come then, for the first time bringing her dolls and tiny china cups, and for the first time they had played at tea together in his cottage with the whispersong singing outside. How wonderful that day had been. How cool and calm and peaceful.

And so many days of make believe games in his cottage had followed, for his playmate had followed, for his playmate had returned with every rain. He could see her face so clearly now, those large, dark eyes, so full of innocent laughter and gentleness and her smile, so joyful and warm. Even her voice smiled with a carefree happiness and a blissful gentleness and . . .

Screams. He remembered screams. And he knew they were not the screams of that dazzling day of sunlight. No, these screams had come from her and they were the cries of a child waking from a nightmare. He could see her face, twisted with a horror he could not understand, her eyes brightened with an unexplainable fear. He could see her running, running fast and furious away from the cottage, away from . . .

He stopped remembering. He watched the raindrops as they pelted into the long grasses and the daisies and wildflowers as they bent their heads in the soft breeze. He listened to the whisper song and waited for his playmate. Surely she would come today.

Through every rain he waited, his little nose pressed up against the glass, until, finally, the rain drops gave way to a summer sun, and the summer sun to falling leaves, which yielded themselves to snowflakes. Until the rains came again, he hid himself inside his cottage, snuggling in corners, hugging the dampness and the dark.

And when he heard the first soft raindrop throw itself gently against the window, he smoothed his face against the glass and looked out upon the garden. She would come now, he thought, she would come with her dolls and we'll play at tea like always. Like always.

And the rain fell into the tall grasses which waved in the wind, playing the whisper song. His whisper song.

Catherine Albertson

WHEN THE FOG LIFTS I BELIEVE I'LL DISAPPEAR

The dry-splash of his stone hitting sand
Surprised him.
Looking cautiously,
Seeing no one,
He scales the lifeguard stand.
On top
He stands tall, and proud
for age 5.

Invisible bullets tear through the serenity
of rolling waves and seagull screams
And bury themselves in his chest and legs.
He tumbles to the sand
In an almost-jump
And lands
In a heap
of little boy.

Brushing the sand from his face and shoulders
He jogs easily to the water;
Washing invisible bullet holes
From his black legs and chest,
He bathes the wounds
Society has inflicted upon his soul.

Russell Whatmore

Well gawd maude the corn's so ripe ahm
just gonna chew a few ears off and
listen for the sunrise.

Hells Bells Mama there's
thunder in a sunrise. A
sunrise ball of ish wish
glue. A glummy red fog with
arms longer than an eye
could reach.

There's a glob in the middle.

Run . . . a glob in the middle, run for your lives.

If your life were your own, would you live it?
Could you live it, could you dare, o grit your
teeth Those Who Are Invisible will carry you
away. A silly dream. You'll stay right here and rot.

Did you drink your quart of spineless laughter
today yon Asphalt King? Give me a sip.

I can run for days or more.
Another sip please.

A Waterfall Can Run Forever.

Indeed, a very nice title,

But it quit running yesterday.

Glenn Powell

He was an old man
Old Joe was.
Big,
with a belly that
through the years
Began to sag
so much
You could hardly see his
belt buckle
anymore;
And a bulbous
Nose
that was lush red
most of the time;
And an old fishing cap
that never did
quite keep the sun
out of his face.

And Old Joe
Fished.
He fished all day
and sometimes
most of the night,
Tho I never did see him
take any fish home.
I think he must have
given his fish
To the boys
who crowded Old Joe's
favorite spot
on the pier
But never caught any fish
(If Old Joe ever
caught any at all)

Old Joe.
He just mostly sat there
till his legs
Cramped up,
And then
he'd walk the length of the pier
and back to his bench
and sit
and fish.
And kind of
watch the sea gulls;
Cussing to himself
at the way the gulls
Never came up
Empty handed.

You could talk
to Old Joe
sometimes;
Ask him
How he was doing.
But Old Joe
never did have
much to say.

He just sat there,
Fishing.
Ignoring
the rest of the world.
Or, maybe,
When he sat there
He just kind of
Forgot
the rest of the world . . .

Seems
the rest of the world
Kind of
Forgot
Old Joe.

Russell Whatmore

LOVE POEM

Oh my heart's a tipsy trolley,
And it's trundling down the tracks,
And the thing it sings,
The thing it rings
As it
Clickety
Clockety
Clacks is —
"Now steady the pole, now grease the wire,
And all you boys stand back!
'Cause I'm bundling down to
The end of the town to
Play with the king of the tracks, boys,
To stay with the king of the tracks!"

Tami Smith

MOON'S SONG

Tossed as the foam-tusked waves you were,
Dipped silver and tangled,
Crashing together in the manshaped moon.
And he, the moon, heard you; heard
You, feather-fingered, draw her
Up the green streams of your eyes,
And water smooth and dappled
As the broken river, signal her
Your smiles through the grinning flesh
You sailed upon; heard your sea-spelled
Sister, swimming secret in your breath,
Bid you part her fierce and hopeful heart
And drown it in a tide of gentle death.

Tami Smith

SONNET

This heated crying of the flesh,
This pounding blood, this pulsing need,
This madness that wells ever fresh,
This fever that demands the seed
Are singing links within the chain
That binds me, willing, to your breast;
As friendship shared, and grief and pain
And laughter and the soul confessed
Are happy cords that hold me fast
To you, my love, with silken knots —
No less that love, if at the last
We touch the stars through separate thoughts;
If there's a tower within my mind
Whose steps are mine alone to find.

Tami Smith

Her last port was New Orleans,
gliding down the turbid waters,
with her steam caliope in full cry,
her stern paddles slapping the water,
a great part of America is gone,
sadness is in the hearts of men.

Other boats passed her,
saluting as they went,
in honor of the "Delta Queen",
How many more good things will go?
In the name of "Progress".

Her last trip was from St. Paul,
slipping pass sleeping towns,
people paid \$70. a day,
for her last nostalgic trip.

The ol' river has lost a friend,
made of wood and a bit of soul,
two fireboats escorted her into New Orleans,
where her friends gave her a last party.

As she entered New Orleans,
the sun peaked from overcast sky,
creating rainbows that sparkled,
jazzy blues could be heard,
from the band on the dock,
as she glided by like a queen.
How many more good things will we lose,
through so called progress?
Goodbye, goodbye my sweet queen.

She has gone down this river,
so many times, without a doubt,
now she's leaving,
sailing off into the rising mists,
past bayous and swamps,
past sleepy delta towns,
sailing into eternity.

Gary Ryan

OUR COUNTRY

What is happening here?
Why are we doing this,
destroying our country slowly,
through pollution and riots,
hatred and destruction reign,
pollution of mind and soul,
where is it going to end, in hell?

From 'Frisco' to New York,
people are changing,
thing are happening,
will we awaken in time,
to save our country?

All over we are in danger,
an unseen menace has come,
changing values and morals,
a terrible evil has descended,
help fight this evil,
liberty, justice and freedom,
must never be lost,
to right or left,
brotherhood forever?
Have we not learned?

Gary Ryan

We are of one mind

Overwhelm the sunshine's splendid spectrum with your own intrinsic light
and inform the rest their fears constellate the graphite sky
of night;
so keep your head and I will tell you ever after you were
right —
for we are of one mind.

Have you heard that, midst the laughter, I am crying in his
startled face —
(who assured the makers of my fate their statements have a
heartfelt place?
Who, with eyes set two feet past your longing, order you to
set the pace?)
We were created with one mind.

And all the others resent
the hastened thoughts that were sent.
We know the meanings alone . . .
They seek the secrets we see;
they tell us nothing is free:
waterfalls churning, cartwheels turning, old woodlands burning;
ancestors carven of stone.

These had their day; now find your own, hold life within your
trembling fingers.
(Those who triumph over doubtfulness become your praises'
loudest singers).
That power, harnessed, rights the belles who tell how they have
misplaced their ringers.
You may know we're of one mind.

Through vague green and orange twilight, noon sky's cobalt
blue enameled plate,
from my destination outward in the measured hands of forceful
fate,
the graceful fall of feathered sands show you how long you're
forced to wait
until you know we're of one mind.

To cross some streams you must pause,
then give some thought to the cause,
and call your heart to the air.
Watch flaunts of bracelets of mist,
bright shines enclosed amethyst,
sunflowers glowing, warm breezes blowing, ideas growing,
to tell the rest that you're there.

All in order though the highways may be bursting at their iron
seams;
rearranging light and shadow to correct a past unspoken dream;
from the madness of wild stormclouds came a sudden unhopd-for
silver gleam:
proff of unity of mind.

Past a river through a city wander every time misunderstood
and wonder for your sanity but remember to save the good.
Call the sense out in life longing and you'll see at last where
we have stood:
on rock, on foundation: one mind.

SENSE . . . SEEK . . . SECURE

I look and I see nothing;
I listen and I hear nothing;
I feel and the course of feeling,
is so rough it sets me reeling.
The taste is bitter, so also I try
to smell, but it is so strong that I cry.

But to feel and never be felt,
is like to hold and never be held,
A child clings tightly to its mother and is not nursed;
a stranger yearns for help and he is cursed;
a businessman seeks a market and he is rejected;
yet a sinner asks for forgiveness and is accepted.

Carl Hensley

And now I wish without wanting;
but yet I hope without flaunting,
that you will come to me awilling,
full of spirit and forgiving;
that we shall live without forgetting,
and look for morrow without regretting.

27 JAN 1975

Carl Hensley

THE BITTER BLADE

If we were young, in season's prime
And knew our minds as schooling do;
If in one soul we could place trust
Or hold it back to love's review;
To know who speaks the truth and who
Envelops us with lies,
A formula for joy we'd make.
The rules of life, revise.

Distinguishing the ones who care
From those with hollow vows,
Our understanding would improve
More than our hearts allow.
Our consciences would sense a world
Which takes its gifts away;
Where romance, peace and comfort
Much too speedily decay.

Regretfully, reality is what we live today.
We cannot shed our feelings,
Fearful that they'll blow away.
Repeating thoughts they do not mean —
Abrasive are their lies.
How painfully before decit
The inoffensive die!

Linda Ryan

THE PUZZLE PUDDLE

praise the haze that plays on your conscious
 interpretations and interpolations of reality to fact
 the pact
 is not exact
 but displays the greys
 and whites of life within the realm of
 reason but it's just teasing
 and leasing
 smiles for whiles
 and turtleneck sweaters for a laugh
 or guffaw or stretch your jaw or whatever
 pleases the palette or seizes the talent to
 crack such a lack of ingenuity only to
 find congruity within the
 deths of non-correlation
 Such twinkle (or wrinkle) of eye discloses
 the case to erase the place
 where memory is shot and fact
 is but a blot in the annals
 of our kind where time is less discreet
 and reveals the orange peals and aromatic chills
 of past disconnections only to find the flow
 is going smoothly and time is a frame of
 mind (or leastwise a riddle in rhyme and
 aint life fine.)
 yes, fine is the line that creates a myriad
 of tastes and haste is not lost
 but a part of particles sailing to the
 point to anoint truth
 with a frosted flash of
 enlightenment sending sounds of serenity
 to be got by what ought to be the
 net of many ages and is the great source
 of truth to be sought
 but only got
 outside the picket fence of reality

 smack dab in the Puzzle Puddle

Glenn Powell

A SMOLDERING SUICIDE

His running nose and sagging eyes are
 very plain to see,
 And yellow teeth and finger tips add to
 his misery.
 Each night he coughs consistently before
 he falls asleep,
 And he can't climb a flight of stairs
 if they're a little steep.

The trophies he won years ago for swimming
 and for track
 Are vestiges of healthy years, he'd never win
 them back.
 For lungs as black as ebony and a heart that's
 bluffing death
 Work hard to keep maintaining life and strug-
 gle with each breath.

But though these symptoms are pronounced, to
 them this man seems blind.
 Although he slowly digs his grave deeper
 with passing time.
 Does he not realize that quite soon he'll
 have to pay the debt;
 To one who's come to rule his life —
 THE STINKING CIGARETTE.

Linda Ryan

ANALYZE IF YOU CAN

Analyze if you can my
mixed verses of hate,
try to define my inner
secrets, see me as I
really am, see if you
can find my real desire.
Contribute your ideas as
many do so I can laugh.
Am I withdrawn, secretive,
or am I loud and open.
Tell me, sir, have you
found yourself?

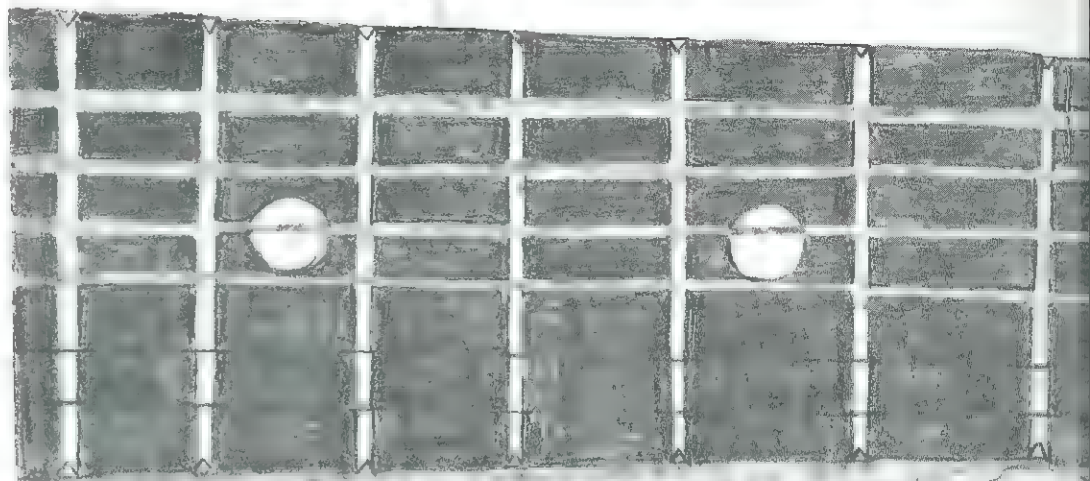
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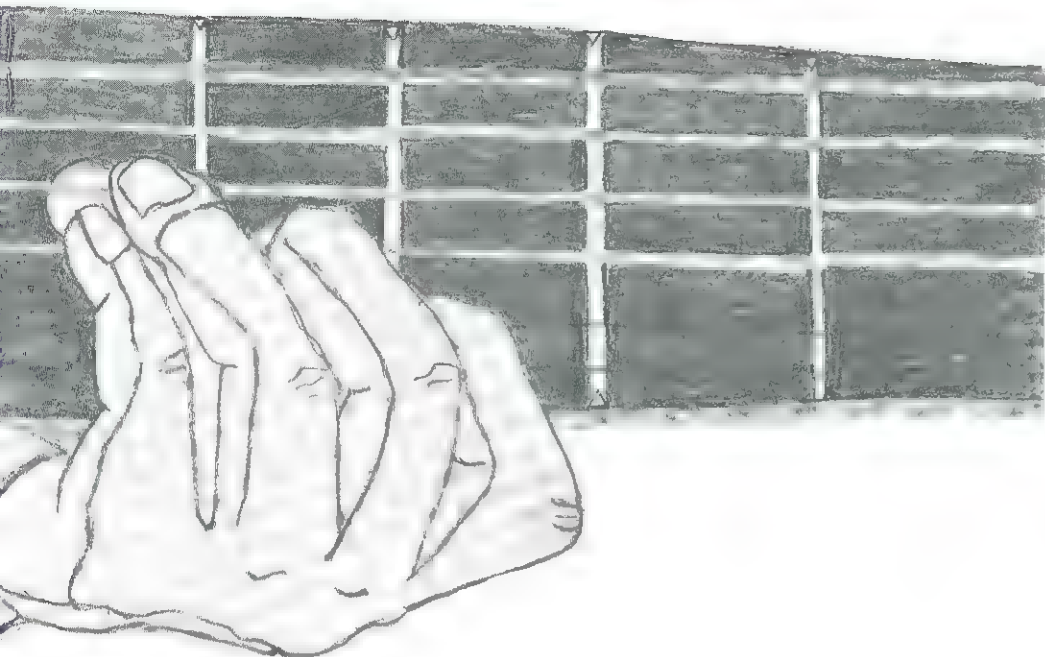
Surrounded by my peers,
I am one within.
Surrounded by my world,
I am one within,
find me if you can,
I am within.

**

The walls are white,
yet they are dark,
The walls are white,
yet they are cold,
The walls are white,
They are my prison
Give me time and I
shall find that
The walls are black.

**





I hear distant sounds
muffled and non-important,
cool are my eyes yet heavy,
motionless is my body,
slow do I breathe,
I lay tranquil,
nonexistant.

**

I see a clown on
stage laughing at his own
mistakes, and so I see
myself, society my audience,
and I wonder if he cries inside
as I do, faces yet no faces.
Laughing, haunting,
my tears are blood as
it drains from my body,
leaving me without strength
to continue, Death will
by my Utopia.

**

I am of the most tranquil.
I have filled many with a
state of depression for they
have tried to reach me,
Some say I never existed;
yet they are the ones who
want me the most of all.

**

Some say you can reach
me through death and
yet many donate. I am
ideal for those tho
believe in me and
believe in others like me.
I am Peace.

Donna Clark

Marilyn Cabezas

STRINGS

For many years I had thought
That my life was not my own.
That somewhere someone else was
Turning the key to every door I opened.
That I had absolutely no control
Over the direction I was taking.
That no matter that I wanted
Something good, someone with strength
To hold onto, to love,
That thing, that Thing was always there,
Reaching out from the dark, from below
(from above?) Taking from me,
Snatching, turning, changing.
Many times I've cried, I've screamed, I've begged,
Please, please, just this once,
Let it be my move,
Just this once
Let this ship be steered by
My hands, my mind, my desires, my dreams —
But, no.
What ever possessed me to think
That I could be that master,
That director, even that actor,
No — I was always just the puppet
And that Thing
It pulled the strings.
But wait — hey world!
Somehow, somewhere along the way
I must have . . .
Here I am wanting you, thinking of you, dreaming
That the warm feeling (love?)
I feel in your presence
Would be,
Could be reciprocated
But afraid that It is up there
(down there?)
Planning, scheming, negotiating
The turns away from you
Because I have no right
(do I?) to make my own
Move toward you.
Then today I knew, I really
Knew that somehow,
Somewhere along the way
I must have cut that string
Because today, right now
You're sitting there watching, smiling,
Loving me.

Peggy Butler

WHY CHILDREN DON'T WRITE BOOKS

With the vast abundance of so-called "children's literature" reaping untold financial profits for pedlars and publishers, it seems odd that virtually none of the authors of these publications are children. Just why aren't there any genuine childhood authors? Why isn't there any valid childhood literature?

First of all, if writing is supposed to be about the real world, it has little relevance to the real world of childhood. If, on the other hand, writing is supposed to be about the real world of childhood, then the real world of childhood makes it appear to be contrived and superfluous. There's simply no point in trying to bring imagination to children; they have too much of that commodity already. If you have childhood, you don't need literature.

Furthermore, to be successful in a community of adult publishers, one must be capable of utilizing particular words in particular sequences. This conjunctive principle could never hope to adapt itself to the mad-sane logic of a child. For a child, words must be unintelligible, pompous, bombastic profundities; like those of a politician. Their meanings should be either obscene, biased, blasphemous, or indisputable nothingness. The idea of using a lot of words and saying nothing is perfectly acceptable to a child. This childish love of words, the love of purely verbal communication with no separable content, destroys the practice of adult literature.

This habit more than likely evolves from the fact that children are great listeners. They are specialists; experts at listening. They like to hear the sounds of words and watch the movement of vocal organs. In the space of two, or six, hours (for time and space don't exist here), one might blurt out the content of several lengthy novels, thereby making the actual writing of them a ridiculous business. For any adult who has ever had a childhood experience, it is easy to see how reasonable it is that stories and poems should be the stuff of warm cozy living rooms or picnics, not cold libraries or schools. After all, wasn't literature always a bardic sort of thing? Didn't speech come along well before the alphabet? Therefore, if you call yourself a poet, recite a poem. If you call yourself a teacher, tell a story, and to hell with selling the stuff in the bookstores. Adults don't permit children to have money anyway.

Alas! Children will never be a center for the dissemination of literature. For writing requires loneliness and discipline — principles not well understood by children.

Perhaps more than anything, a writer needs to be taken seriously, and not regarded as a colorful piece of property to bolster the family image, or a black soul to be threatened with exorcism. And yet, the literary history of our age proves that to be a good writer one must become child-like. One must be absolutely insane for words, filled with obscure and unknown realities, and possess a bitter rebellious intuitive knowledge of the hard cold sterile world into which one has been cast. What, in fact, one must be is a child in exile: for the life of a child is all too literary, and it can't sustain a literary life.

Richard McMonagle

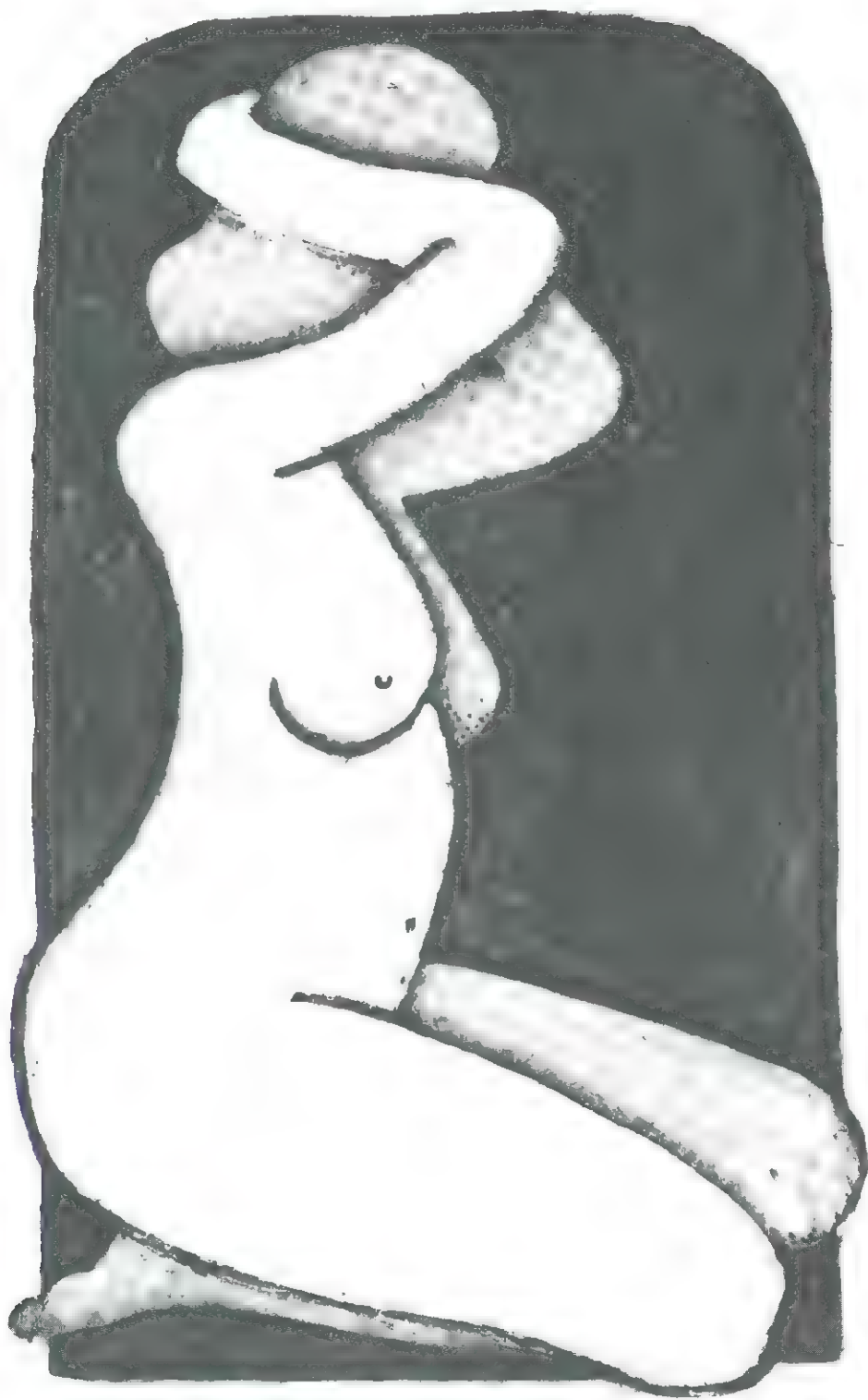
You are not black of skin
Poor of wealth or
Ignorant of thought.

You are just black of mind
Poor of soul and
Ignorant of man.

M. Lundberg

Your smile silences
fears, doubts, and loneliness.
Your smile speaks of
faith, discovery, and love.
Come, gently, touch me with your smile.

M. Lundberg



THE POLYMORPHOUS APHRODISIAC

the polymorphous aphrodisiac
is one who must know where it's at
although he keeps forgetting
where he's been

he coagulates concurrences
while trying to make inferences
as to the quaint origin
of your sin

he's the one that bleats and screams
and he'll resort to any means
to prove he owns the eyes that
know you best

a hest

unless

you have a much discerning eye
he'll flatter you with your own pride
and then he'll bring you down from
feeling fine

the polymorphous aphrodisiac
talks to you with the front of his back
to tell you how his face does
truly shine

quite a line

and i found him stepping snappy
in my shoes

Glenn Powell

So —
until I can get up the money
I'll just fly to the moon
every night,
cause I know for a fact
to go there and come back
that it only requires my time;
and my heart is
so longing to travel.

And then when midnight
stars appear,
the misty moon comes down
to sit beside the
crackling fire
and help it soothe the ground;
and
my heart sits
beside him —
just being free.

28

THE JOURNEY

Silently, like the rippling stream
Of life on which I ride,
My feelings flow in spirals
To embrace me as I glide.

Each sadness is a stumbling stone,
Each joy, a quenching ale;
To ease frustration's racking thirst
And guide me as I sail.

Decisions form the waterfall
Which distantly I see.
It's something which I can't avoid;
Plunges eternally.

Endeavors spring 'round every turn
To challenge all my skill,
And must be met with strength of mind
If life, I'm to fulfill.

But yet, what I can't view ahead,
This is what frightens me.
For what will remote waters bring,
Success or misery?

In my mind living seems to be
A game of Blind Man's Bluff.
To win, you have to feel your way;
Listening is not enough.

So Confidence, my captian be
As time's waters revolve.
May maps of past encounters
My destiny help me solve.

Although the whirlpools will appear,
And pressures may enhance;
Apathy, instant failure brings —
But each attempt, one chance.

Linda Ryan

"Pteradactyl"

Pteradactyl,
with a fat smile on his
Bony face,
Outer space,
Meteorites,
in downward flight,
Collision course,
Killing force, struck the bird
going doward and screaming through the air.
Somethings gone wrong, swan dive,
and swan song at the same time,
Pteradactyl,
in a while shall die,
with broken wings,
every thing falls down,
hard ground kills.
The pteradactyl, I think,
is extinct.

Frank Smith

Blank
My mind falls
In slow motion
Thru the voids
Of empty thoughts:
Finding tranquil peace
In simply being
Blank.

Lin Harper

For C.D.V.

Many times when we're apart, I think of our moments
together — the smiles, the understandings, the
tender touches, and the quiet thoughts.
And on the days when my longing for these moments
becomes an ache, I look up into the sky and
wish I could be the wind — to touch your face,
ruffle your hair, and whisper
softly
to
you
late
at
night . . .

M. Lundberg



A DOVE

A dove

Flying on alabaster wings
Shining in the silver moonlight
Flashing of pale symphonies as he flies
Slightly glowing in desolate beauty
Little dove
Alone in the night
In the dark sky
Among barely seen clouds
Is not frightened
For the dove knows peace in the night

A dove

Sitting quietly on a tree branch
Small head tucked under small wing
Waiting for the dawn to come
Waiting for the first ray of sunlight
in its lonely majesty
At this sign
A small soft coo floats upon the morning
mists
In purest appreciation
For the dove knows joy in the morning
For the dove knows peace in the dawn

A dove

Flashing white in the
In the glory of yellow sunlight
against bright blue sky
against my heart
A picture which lasts but a second
in infinity

A dove

Continuing his journey
Into the prisms of sunset
Into the varied darkness of night
Into the purity of dawn
For the dove knows peace in all
around him
In his voice he knows
In his flight he knows
In his heart he knows

Will we ever know
what the dove knows
In his simple heart?

T. Clark

THE LEGEND OF WIZARDS VALE

I do not heed warnings of doom

behind me watchlights fade to gloom

strong horse under me, broadsword at side, i start out
on a fateful ride

people died with fates unknown
who pass that valleys entrance stone
but that did not dishearten I
who fears no man twixt earth and sky
and am I not a child of war
accustomed much to pain and gore
but as I ride into the night
I hear low sounds to left and right
I wondered if the tales were true
of that strange night when moon shown blue
and wind did howl with savagesound
and soulless demons did abound
a warrior king of savage times
was cut down in his savage prime
they say who'er can spend the night
when moon shines blue through semons flight
that man will fill the destiy
of he who will set all men free
from fear of wizards age-old spells
which sends strong men to nameless hells
and now I stand on top that mound
and see most lands which lie around
I see what caused the sounds i heard
it was not made by beasts nor bird
surrounded now by nameless things
with pointed claws and folded wings
but of fear did I not one twinge feel
for naught that lives is immune to steel
"come out" I cried "and do your worst"
"but this I ask you — who dies first?"

Mark Graham

Dawn: Newcastle

Filigree lace across silhouette spires
Conspiring with essence of day
The nightbirds of dawning appear on the grass
The paperboy scares them away

A kelly green carpet of newly mown lawn
A rose garden shining with rain
A white picket fence turning pink with the dawn
As morning screeps into the lane

A cool breeze is blowing, the wind whispers "East"
The sun's coming up, beaming down
Then a shadow of warmth, with a deep golden glow
Sweeps inward and blankets the town.

In the houses the windows blink open their eyes
As shades and blinds raise to the light
Then faces lean stretching out over the sills
And yawn a farewell to the night

The last necktied banker has left for his job
While weathervanes breezily twirled
As an unwinding canvas of morning's sweet spell
Creeps softly to cover the world.

David Drummond

I am lost in a labyrinth
Somewhere near the Everglades
Amid avocados and alligators,
Mangoes and melancholia . . . and
The United States Sugar Refineries.

I am lost in a labyrinth
Somewhere on a western world
Where sacrilegious minarets
Scar the encircling parapet
Every hundred yards or so . . .

(Silent Stonehenge megaliths
watching Daedalean dreams
melt in semi-tropic sunshine)

I am lost in a labyrinth
Somewhere in a forgotten universe
(or my own mind)
And I am unsure if I should contact
God,
The Parole Man

or Ralph Nader.

Michael Alanzo

Thoughts Of An Exiled Collegian

I am home. But that is impossible. I am a freshman at Palm Beach Junior College in sunny Florida. I major in Journalism; I hitch-hike back to Seventh Street after classes; I take Music Appreciation; I talk to People in the cafeteria; I stand in line to register. But I am home. I remember nearly falling down the ramp from the orange and yellow Air Jamaica Seven-o-Seven. Remember going through immigrations, seeing my father, my younger brother and sister. I am home.

"Stir it up, little darling, stir it up . . ." Bob Marley and the Wailers plead above the driving, pulsating "reggae" beat, thick lecherous bass chords roll out of tall homemade speakers. My heart races with the excitement of the primitive gut-rhythms. I am home.

"I will stir it, stir it every minute, all you have to do is keep it in it, come on and stir it up." I tremble in the Jamaica night; out on the verandah of an old estate house, the hot, spicy smell of meat pates seems to dance between the sugarcane plants on moonlight and cold mountain air. Around me lithe, confident bodies sway, jerk, grind together in the "S-90 Shank." the sweet, cold rum-punch lightens my head and I begin to move slowly, rhythmically, feeling strength in my ecstasy. I am home.

Suddenly the twanging guitar is gone, the drums and piano are silenced, the visceral, life-giving movement of the bass rides on alone, all powerful, shoving the dancers closer together and to the wall for support. Scrub-time. I reach out and touch. A short-cropped afro turns; the thick pleasant "Ganga" smoke fills my lungs defiant eyes pierce mine, but it is Christmas Eve night. I move in to claim my prize. I am home.

"Your recipe is soooooo tasty." My brother smiles at me from a corner and I wave abandonedly. I am home and high. I feel warm and safe. I will never leave Kingston again. I will never leave the West Indies. No more rushing here and crashing there. No more flashing red lights and screaming sounds in the night. Now I accept my heritage. I am home.

"Hey! Dave! Ya goin to Big Daddy's tonight?"

. . . My eyes hurt, they have been closed for fifteen minutes, the sun has heated my textbooks. People are pouring out of the Student Lounge. On the stone table in front of me rest a pen and an opened notebook. I had meant to start working on my essay for the "Media" writing competition. I get up, take my books and head for SS 56.

I was home.

Colin Higgins

are you?

a soulless mindless wanderer in a vast nothingness

on a path to a star

to find an answer

a reason

salvation

I'm not.

I may be soulless, what is a soul

how do I know if I have one

what does it do.

but I don't believe myself to be mind less

my mind questions the existence of my soul

my mind roves, wanders, flies, crawls

it's good, it's bad

it's quick, creative, carefree, contented.

then it's slow unimaginative, troubled and restless,

but always there and alive.

Rick Campbell

sometimes I'm crashing down a hill bouncing and flying headlong in some crazy pattern with no idea of where I'm going or how I'll end up but sure I'm going to be there really fast.

sometimes I'm floating in a stream heading in a certain direction, not at all sure where I'll land, but the trip is so smooth that it's not really to important to know about landings, and such stuff.

Rick Campbell

it was my prerogative /or/ a suicidal note of
the late mr. jones

if i throw this blade into my own
to slash the strings which hold my soul
the hands that hold the knife will not belong to me
but to those determined to destroy me
rather than forget me
free me
understand me

the hands will stretch and fight and strain
to cut the life and let it drain
the minds in each hand's head not admitting
that they had cut the deepest pain

each man's soul is but his own
a mere slave to life till death grants freedom
for god's plantation has no slavery
a land to where no men with greed run

crying can i play god for just a while
and in despair give my soul to satan
rather to you i may give my soul
for you are my life
my life
i love you

i watched a lightbulb die last night
and knew that i had lost your light
it seemed that it did not want to die itself
but others owned it — they controlled it
they turned out life from the wall switch
and placed it on the back shelf

it's hard for me to see through darkness
when moments ago there shone such brightness
once life — effervescing — streaming — pouring
now, turned black

the once cheerful, glistening glass body
is now but an empty vacuum
a mere container
for a cold dark heart

i feel remorse without touching; i see hatred through closed eyes
my love is for a single person; all others i despise
i taste the bitterness of lonely; although i asked for none
i hear the sound of records turning; no music from the speaker comes
i think of things i've got to say; yet, although not deaf, i am dumb
speechless . . .
no . . . yes . . .
death!!!!

death.

death rings in the air (ringing in the air)
"for whom the bell tolls" nobody knows him

the late mr. jones

with clicks of tongues the lizards catch their flies to eat them
swallowed down with gulps they're gone — the snake lives on
with death yet full of life . . .

death rings in the air

(ringing in the air)

"for whom the bell tolls" nobody knows him

the late mr. jones

fortunate mr. jones

Mark E. Irwin

"The Trip Home"

Sinking down, walking through town,
wearing away gradually,
til each stop is on a bloody knee,
the road is rising I believe.

People walking by, I imagine they cry,
imagination is a great lie,
actually laughter is on their lips,
as I slide down sidewalks on my hips.

Struggling along trying to act normally,
using my hands as I did feet formerly,
I realize this as a definite risk,
as soon I was walking on my wrists.
(Presently my arms would cease to exist)

Finally when I was almost no more,
I came to my house, crashed through the door,
and as I waited for what I'd come for,
I rested my chin upon the floor.

Frank Smith

POSESSION

Bridled jaguar by her side,
My tongue, it hung, to see her ride by
as aloft on winds, I watched her glide by,
And fell, awed, to the ground
I kissed the earth, for giving birth
to such a creature, I must meet her,
I rose up with a plan to greet her,
but I could not make the sound.

She turned around, the cat gave out a roar.
She turned again, and then she was no more.

I felt the air before my eyes, and
Wondered why I was surprised, an
Apparition, I surmised,
was all it could have been.
But, dressed in white, she stood as before,
a leash that held a cat no more,
a gesture said what it was for,
and I was by her side again.

She turned around, the cat gave out a roar,
She turned again, and then we were no more.

Frank Smith

GYPSY

Twisting torse around a fire, outlined of black and
flame spawned lights, turning, spiraling, a dull,
glowing patch of red, rises in the night
Burning witch dance
Voice, which chants
mystic encantations.

The winds cold hand draws the crowd of watchers
into a mob-like mass, staring up at the rising smoke,
it turns to blue, and they gasp,
and draw backward.

Flames claw forward at the dancing figure who circless
the fire in leaping steps and exaggerated expressions,
of a flames twisting contortions.

She bends to the fire and lowers her face into the
flames, her hair begins to burn, her flesh begins to
blacken.

She does not fall and die

She raises up, stands high with arms outstretched
upward and laughs, her body now a blue-flame torch.

She shakes and writhes, and the flames fall off
as rags of clothes, little pieces of fire float to
the ground.

and the dancer, with the twisting torso, is still,
and the crowd turns to leave.

Frank Smith

"Sadness"

Ominouse and anonymouse, I'm the commonest of pain
I came before, I'm here now and I'LL surely come again
I can soar with your spirits, or I can make them descend
I am darkness of thought, carressing minds that have not

Coldy my fingers can enter your mind and find just the way
to take warmth away, and strangle your hopes, like so many
ropes, that swing tight, in the night

Your heart shall melt when I am felt/and run red to the
depths of your soul,/ your ego grows small till it's hardly
at all/and hides in the darkest hole

What can you do, nothing my friend, just except the depression
your in, and if you get out well just think again, I came
before I'm here now and I'll surely come again.

Frank Smith

Yards As Wide As Streets

"See the pretty white snow, Baby. Your papa comin' home soon now; he gonna take us with him this time, he promised. Sh, Baby, don't ya cry. Momma knows you's cold." The fragile black woman drew the small fussing bundle closer to her and moved the battered rocker in a slow rhythmic motion.

"Jus' you wait, Baby. When he comes, he'll take us to that place yonder where ya can run in dem yards as wide as streets. An' ya can see buildin's that jus' shine in that ol' sun."

Slowly the shades of evening crept through the cracked windows, and the dimly lit street lamp cast dancing shadows on the bleak walls. The performing shapes dispersed a mocking gaiety in the solemn room. Only the soiled gray-tinged mattress which emitted a suffocating odor shared the dank hovel with the rocking chair. Placing the sleeping child in the corner of the pallet, the woman wrapped a tattered piece of sheet around the baby. Easing her shivering form down near her child, the woman kept a vigilant eye on every corner. A shrieking cadence pierced the hushed darkness. Every muscle stiffening with terror, the woman waited for her oppressor.

"Well, ya mean critters, I'll be gone soon, ya here! An' then ya can have the place. Now git outa my way, damn ya!" she ordered, swinging a red-stained cane at a scurring black blur.

The child stirred and began a loud protest. "Oh, Baby, are ya hungry agin? Momma's here." The infant searched for comfort, and the gentle woman guided the small sucking mouth to her breast. Jerking violently from the dark, shriveled nipple, the baby howled in pain.

"Please, Baby, don't cry no more. Momma's hungry, too. Listen, when your papa comes ta git us, we's never goin' have this hurt in our bellies again. Sh, child, stop your cryin'."

Picking up the multi-colored satin pillow, edged in gaudy yellow fringe, the woman sank her tear swollen face into the sequin letters which spelled, "Atlantic City". "When ya was agrowin' in my belly, your papa went away to this big place. He done promised he'd come back to git you an' me. When he takes us away, ya ain't gonna be sad no more, Baby."

Wiping the dirt encrusted arm across her eyes, the black woman stared at her squawling child. Softly she sang, "Hush, little baby, don't ya cry. Papa's gonna buy ya a diamond ring . . ." As the baby's anguish grew, he increased his screaming and thrashing. "Please don't fret no more. I ain't got no milk for ya. Poor baby. Please don't cry, don't cry."

Having retreated to the security of the chair, she resumed her rocking to quiet the wailing child. "Hush, little one. It ain't gonna hurt no more now." Gently passing her lips over the infant's face, the sobbing woman took the pillow in her hand. "Can ya see those yards as wide as streets? Are they pretty?"

M. Lundberg

goodbyes needn't bring to mind sorrow

you saw me through sad eyes
the blade left its shadow
you met me rebounding
and the pool of tears shallow
you liked what you saw in
this man lost and broken
i, the image you treasured
you, the new hopeful token
of a love gone before

but this image you treasured
it was tempered by the fire
from the memory of living
in a dream not my own
and having been tempered
i've slowly been bending
and changing my shaping
to be born once again

well i'm not that lost person
you came to know sitting
all alone on that bar chair
with want in my eyes
oh had life been more gentle
had fate been less fickle
we'd have been different people
living lives more our own

a year or two older
a month or two wiser
a day or two longer
and you'd have seen me anew
but although love's misleading
and life does have its questions
bid farewells without sorrow
wishing answers for you

Mark E. Irwin

dream

i lay alone upon the grassy land
head low
as if to graze upon its greeness
rolling over
looking upward
trees swayed rhythmically
before crimson-ringed clouds
and the breezes carried me
and the land became a swing
upon which i sat
the wind winging me
higher, lower, faster, slower
into night
sun became moon
and moon became sail
upon tree-mast
and earth-ship
gliding me down rivers of stars
across ocean skys
and finally

casting thankful anchor
at your side

Mark E. Irwin

A morning with a chill seems to give me strength. The
grass still wet with dew, the birds that call from a distance
becoming one to explore the crisp stout swift wind that
ruffles your hair, the clear blue sky with a bright yellow
sun that warms your face as the rays hit it. The insatiable
urge to laugh, sing, and a premonition of a new life.
This is the birth.

Marilyn Cabezas



Communion

Almost saddened with the glory of sunrise,
I turned to see the fire catch in your eyes —
red, orange, in their blackness seemed to burn —
it flashed from mine, red, orange, in return.
An interchange of elements took place.
My earthiness, the fire in your face,
commingled, and new understanding rooted
(more to the nighttime than the morning suited).

In the river, afternoons, we paddled,
or fence-rails on tasselled corn-fields straddled
to watch the sky and sniff the hungry air.
And once again the elements would share
each in each, air and water mixed;
a part in you, a portion in me fixed.

As people we work out our ways alone.
How seldom are our personal humors known
by one another. But when this is true,
as it has come about with me and you,
a greater empathy cannot exist
than when two separate essences entwist.
Through mingling of fire, water, earth,
and air, a fresh awareness reaches birth.

Flick Mager

Kaleidoscope

Ruby glass when struck with light
throws out crimson gleams.
Thus do thoughts of your mind bright
disperse my sparkling dreams.

Then, scattered round, the glittering bits
rise purple, red, and blue,
form one design that neatly fits
daydreaming me to you.

Flick Mager

His eyes
Saw only the ocean
and her face
in the crest
of every wave.

Not even the shrill
of the seagulls
penetrated the rhythm
of the ocean.

His servitude
to the sea
was etched on his face
by the sedentary watch
he kept.

Days
Upon infinite days
Of searing sunlight
Had turned his skin dark,
Yet
he remained
Sallow somehow.

When his love
Expunged him
The ocean
befriended him.

And the solace
of the ocean's
rhythmic cantor
lulled his trauma.

The ocean
Sang to him
in a voice that bore him
Pacificality.
A voice that never roared,
But only whispered.

Russell Whatmore

The Awakening

I awaken just to face the warmth of the sun
And to know that I'm in Vietnam,
Makes me bitter against Uncle Sam,
Because he really doesn't give a damn.

People around me with hunger in their eyes.
As they beg their hands reach for the skies.
Is it for them or ourselves that we fight?
Or just to protect our stainless pride?

I have seen and I have felt,
Their touch makes me melt.
It says "Give me peace, give me bread."
And in their hearts the hunger for their dead.

Dennis Michaud

Lonely Thoughts

Sitting on the dock of life,
I watch the sea
As she plays tag with the rocks
and my mind.
Fragments of indecision
lay along her beach;
Her hands try to sneak up on me,
but when I see her,
She quietly restrains,
only to come again.

Barb Newsom

POPCORN GIRL PRETTY AS THE DAWN
FRESH AS THE NEW MORNING SUN
GENTLE AS AN INFANT FAWN
KNOWS WHAT'S BEST WHEN IT COMES TO FUN.

LOVER OF NATURE SWEET FOREST CREATURE
I WISH EVERYONE COULD MEET HER
CURLY GOLDYLOCKS FLOW GLOWING DOWN HER BACK
DRESSED IN WHITE GATHERS FLOWERS IN HER SACK
PURE AS THE FIRST FALL SNOW
SWEET AS HONEY AND MOUNTAIN DEW
OH IF EVERYONE ONLY KNEW
POPCORN GIRL PRETTY AS THE DAWN.

14 DEC 73

Jim Cox





Seeing you again

Seeing you again
what a peaceful venture I did share.
Seeing you — seeing you again . . .
what a delight to see you there.
Like walking under a shaded tree
limbs of beauty surrounded me.
You, your friendship so warm and clear
made me laugh
was full of cheer.

Seeing you — seeing you again . . .
was worth my time, my time to spend.
You looked so well, and enchanted me with your song.
You were yourself
There was nothing wrong.

Seeing you — seeing you again . . .
made me so happy to be your friend,
to share your day, and find time to say
I hope our friendship never ends,
for I'm so happy to see you
to see you
again.

Cyndi Vickery

Feeling Pitch Black

The sky dripped stars
Faintly 'round a scorching moon:
Full and yellow with a ring. And
i hoped for a cloud but found
Nothing to darken
The sky with midnight on her wing.
Oh! Harvest Moon.
River Moon.
June Moon.
Old Devil Moon.
Moon Over Miami.
You're just lighting up my park bench
Like a street lamp
In a high-crime district.

Mark E. Irwin

I think today I shall be a tree
I'll open my leaves at early morn
And catch the slowly falling rays that burn
I'll stretch my limbs far and wide
And feast upon the afternoon rain
But slowly as the evening comes
I'll limber my limbs with a graceful bow
And close my leaves and bid the night

Walter Davis

PURPOSE LOST

Our lives are chests of sunken treasure
in a sea of immortality.
We search in masks of plated glass
to find our personality.

Beneath warring waves of hate and love
we seek to find true treasure.
Distracted by some foolish dream
we search, instead, for pleasure.

While looking forward onto yesterdays,
we ignore sad future's sounding blast.
Knowing chests of gold and pirate's loot
are treasures never found to last.

Mark E. Irwin

